

§ 162A-24. Regional Water Supply Planning Revolving Fund established; conditions and procedures.

(a) There is established under the control and direction of the Department of Administration a Regional Water Supply Planning Revolving Fund, to consist of any moneys that may be appropriated for use through the fund by the General Assembly or that may be made available to it from any other source. The Department may make advances from the fund to any county, municipality, sanitary district, or to counties and municipalities acting collectively or jointly as a regional water authority, for the purpose of meeting the cost of advance planning and engineering work necessary or desirable for the development of a comprehensive plan for a regional water supply system as defined in this Article. Such advances shall be subject to repayment by the recipient to the Department from the proceeds of bonds or other obligations for the regional water supply system, or from other funds available to the recipient including grants, except when, in the judgment of the Department of Environmental Quality, a proposed plan for development and construction of a countywide or other regional water system is not feasible because of design and construction factors or because available sources of raw water supply are inadequate or because construction of a proposed system is not economically feasible, (but not if the applicant decides not to proceed with construction that has been planned and which the Department of Environmental Quality have declared to be feasible).

(b) The Department of Administration shall not make any advance pursuant to this section without first referring the application and proposal to the Department of Environmental Quality for determination as to whether the following conditions have been met:

- (1) The proposed area is suitable for development of a regional water supply system from the standpoint of present and projected populations, industrial growth potential, and present and future sources of raw water.
- (2) The applicant proposes to undertake long-range comprehensive planning to meet present and projected needs for high quality water service through the construction of a regional water supply system as defined in this Article. The determination by the Department of Environmental Quality that the proposed system would be a "regional system," as defined by this Article, shall be conclusive.
- (3) The applicant proposes to coordinate planning of the regional water supply with land-use planning in the area, in order that both planning efforts will be compatible.
- (4) The applicant proposes to employ an engineer licensed to practice in the State of North Carolina to prepare a comprehensive regional water supply plan, which plan will provide detailed information on source or sources of water to meet projected domestic and industrial water demands; proposed system, including raw water intake(s), treatment plant, storage facilities, distribution system, and other waterworks appurtenances; proposed interconnections with existing systems, and provisions for interconnections with other county, municipal and regional systems; phased development of systems to achieve ultimate objectives if economic feasibility is in question; projected water service areas; proposed equipment; estimates of cost and projected revenues; and methods of financing.

(c) In addition to the above conditions, the Department of Administration shall not make any advance to any applicant until the following conditions have also been met:

- (1) The Department has determined that there is a reasonable prospect of federal (or State) aid in the financing of the projected work if the undertaking is one that will be dependent upon federal (or State) aid.

(2) The Department has received firm assurances from the applicant that the works or project, if feasible, will be undertaken.

(d) All advances made pursuant to this section shall be repaid in full, within one year of the start of construction on the projected system, or within six months after the issuance of bonds for the financing of construction of the system, or within six years from the date of the making of the advance, whichever comes first. The Department may, in its discretion, require the repayment of any advance in installments.

(e) The Department of Administration may adopt such rules and regulations with respect to the making of applications or the receipt of advances as are consistent with the terms and purpose of this section.

(f) The provisions of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina (Local Government Acts) shall not apply to advances made from the Regional Water Supply Planning Revolving Fund as authorized in this Article. (1971, c. 892, s. 1; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; 1989, c. 727, ss. 213, 214; 1997-443, s. 11A.123; 2015-241, s. 14.30(u).)